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CC:
Subject: Politico: Jackson: 'Public pressure' will make fracking greener

Jackson: 'Public pressure' will make fracking greener

By Erica Martinson
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Public pressure will force industry innovation to make hydraulic fracturing greener, EPA Administrator Lisa Jackson said Friday.

"Fracking fluids will be greener. Water use will go down. All because, frankly, the industry can do it, must do it and will feel the public pressure, not the EPA pressure, to do this in a responsible way," Jackson said Friday at a conference of the National Council for Science and the Environment.

Jackson was speaking in response to a question about EPA's decision to deliver water to four homes in Dimock, Pa., where natural gas drilling is thought to have contaminated wells. The EPA is also conducting further testing at 61 homes.

Jackson said that while "we have some data, it's very poor data right now; it's quite incomplete," but contaminant levels are "high enough that they justify us bringing those four homes water" and initiating further sampling.

But EPA has limited authority under the law, Jackson noted, and the first question for the agency is "do we have authority to act? People don't like that, but it's very important. We can't spend the public's money if we're not following the law."

Consequently, EPA is focusing on its Superfund authority based on the chemicals it knows have been released as part of the fracking process, Jackson said.

"I happen to believe that natural gas can and should be developed in a safe manner," Jackson said, adding that President Barack Obama believes that natural gas drilling is key to U.S. energy independence and economic success.

But she and the president believe that safe, green processes are also important, Jackson said. "I also believe that the attention from EPA will be met by the industry with a renewed focus on how to do that. And it will be innovation and science — many of the innovations already exist — that will be brought to bear," she said.